

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01795 091954Z
ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1795

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP; PFOR, SP, US
SUBJECT: FRAGA ACCUSED OF CIA LINKAGE

1. POSSIBLE, A LEFT-LEANING, SENSATIONALIST WEEKLY MADRID
MAGAZINE WHICH HAS MANIFESTED A LONGSTANDING PENCHANT FOR
"EXPOSING" ALLEGED U.S. INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES IN SPAIN
(TYPICAL CHARGES INCLUDED THE ALLEGED PRESENCE OF A
SINISTER SEISMOGRAPH IN THE EMBASSY AND THE OCCUPATION OF
THE ENTIRE TOP FLOOR OF A DOWNTOWN HOTEL BY THE CIA), TODAY
ACCUSED MANUEL FRAGA OF BEING LINKED TO THE CIA. IN A
COVER STORY ("FRAGA, MAN OF THE CIA") WHICH TITILLATINGLY
PROMISES MUCH MORE THAN THE INNUENDO AND INFERENCE THAT
IT DELIVERS, POSSIBLE PAINTS FRAGA AS THE CIA-' CHOSEN
MAN, EARLY ON, TO KEEP THE LID ON POST-FRANCO SPAIN AND,
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PAGE 02 MADRID 01795 091954Z

AFTER HIS FORTUNES DECLINED WITH HIS EXIT FROM THE GOVT
LAST YEAR, AS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE AT LEAST TO KEEP THE
FRANCOIST RIGHT IN LINE THROUGH HIS LEADERSHIP OF ALIANZA
POPULAR (TEXT BEING POUCHED).

2. EVEN IN HIS LEAD-IN EDITORIAL, POSSIBLE DIRECTOR PALOMARES
SKIRTS THE CHARGE MADE ON THE COVER, EMPHASIZING THAT

"NATURALLY... THE CIA NEVER ENTERED INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH FRAGA," BUT THAT HE CLEARLY WAS THE MAN CHOSEN BY THE AGENCY TO BE THE "SPANISH CARAMANLIS." THE INTRODUCTION TO THE PIECE THEN FURTHER ATTENUATES THE SPECTACULAR CHARGE ON THE COVER BY MUSING VAGUELY, INTER ALIA, THAT, "THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER SOMEONE IS AN AGENT OF THE CIA OR NOT; NOR WHETHER HE IS A MAN OF THE CIA WHO MAY RECEIVE MONEY OR NOT, BUT WHO WILL BE AIDED (UNSPECIFIED) BY THE U.S. TO SCALE THE POLITICAL HEIGHTS OF HIS COUNTRY IN ORDER TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S."

3. THE TEXT OF THE STROY ITSELF IS LARGELY A RE-HASH OF WELL-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT FRAGA'S PUBLIC LIFE AND IS A RATHER STANDARD CRITICAL INTERPRETATION OF HIS POLITICAL TRAJECTORY. FRAGA'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE CIA IS "ESTABLISHED" PRINCIPALLY BY LISTING HIS VISITS TO THE U.S. AND THE NICE THINGS HE HAS SAID OR WRITTEN ABOUT THE U.S. AND ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM. MORE (BUT NOT VERY) SPECIFICALLY, IT IS ALLEGED THAT:
--DURING A VISIT TO THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, FRAGA WAS PASSED INFORMATION (IMPLICITLY, BY THE CIA) ABOUT OPUS DEI INVOLVEMENT IN THE MATESA SCANDAL, WHICH HE THEN FED TO FRANCO PERSONALLY. THIS INFORMATION BACKFIRED, HOWEVER, WHEN FRANCO KEPT ON CARRERO BLANCO AND HIS OPUS DEI TEAM AND DROPPED FRAGA FROM THE CABINET.
-- THE MAGAZINE "VISION," WHICH POSSIBLE ALLEGES IS "KNOWN TO BE FUNDED BY THE CIA," HAS PERIODICALLY SAID COMPLEMENTARY THINGS ABOUT FRAGA.
--ROBERT MOSS OF THE "ECONOMIST," WHO IS "KNOWN FOR HIS IMPLICATION WITH THE CIA AS THE RESULT OF HIS ARTICLES
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PAGE 03 MADRID 01795 091954Z

ON ALLENDE'S CHILE," HAS PRAISED FRAGA.
--THOUGH FRAGA'S TENURE AS INTERIOR MINISTER IS TREATED AT SOME LENGTH, NO ALLEGATION OF A CIA LINKAGE DURING THAT PERIOD IS MADE.

4. COMMENT: THIS SORT OF CHARACTER ASSASSINATION IS UNCOMMON, EVEN FOR THE COMBATIVE AND SENSATIONALIST ELEMENTS OF THE SPANISH PRESS. BUT FRAGA'S OWN PUGNACIOUS PERSONALITY MAKES HIM A PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE TARGET FOR THIS KIND OF MUD-SLINGING FROM THESE QUARTERS. WHILE FRAGA MAY BE WARY OF APPEARING TO PROTEST TOO MUCH, HE OBVIOUSLY CANNOT LET UNSUBSTANTIATED CHARGES OF THIS SORT BECOME PART OF THE PUBLIC RECORD WITHOUT OBJECTION. WE WOULD GUESS THAT LEGAL CHARGES MIGHT EVEN BE BROUGHT BY HIM IN THIS CASE. FRAGA MAY ALSO ASK US TO DENY THESE ALLEGATIONS. REQUEST GUIDANCE. EATON

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